



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

tendencies of change. This seems obvious enough: but it is an obvious truth which is liable to be missed because the opposite error is not explicitly propounded, but lurks in a vague acquiescence in the drift of events.

H. SIDGWICK.

NEWNHAM COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

---

### AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AS A RELIGION.

THE nations of the ancient world—Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans—drew no line of demarcation between religious and political life, between Church and State. In all of them, the gods were members of the State, and the service due to them was a State function. They could form no conception of a State without gods and worship; and no one could be a member of the State without worshipping its gods. A man going beyond the limits of a god's territory could not worship him. David could not worship Yahweh, when driven out from his "inheritance" (1 Sam. xxvi. 19). Individuals who sought to disown the gods of their nation were often punished with death. This was the case with Socrates in Athens, and with many Jews and Christians under the Roman empire.

Two things resulted from this, one good and one evil: (1) there was in the lives of the ancient peoples a unity, a wholeness, to which modern life is a stranger; (2) there was absent from their lives the universalism, the cosmopolitanism, with which ours are familiar. The exclusiveness of nationalism forbade universality of religion. It was only through the separation of the two that religion could become universal. As far as the Western world is concerned, this separation first took place among the Jews, and through the agency of their prophets. It is in Amos, the earliest of the writing prophets, that we first find the conception of a universal god, not exclusively bound up with a single people, but extending his care to all peoples and to all the earth. However much Israel might claim to be, in a special sense, the chosen son of

that god, this conception necessarily broke the bond between nationalism and religion. While the former remained partial, the latter became universal. In the struggle between the universal religion of the prophets and the partial nationalism of the Hebrew people, the latter succumbed, and the former rose on its ruins. The Jews, after the captivity, formed a Church, whose very nature it is to be universal, and not a nation. For long ages, indeed, they failed to realize this, and did their best to be an exclusive nation, and it was only in Christianity, with its epochal "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's," that religion at last became universal, separating itself from the State, and standing, as something higher and more commanding, over against it. It then connected itself with certain universal tendencies that had been growing up among the Greeks and Romans, and, in great measure, disowned the State altogether. The State, at best, was allowed the control of things temporal, while the Church claimed for herself all authority in things eternal. This arrangement might have been almost unobjectionable, if the temporal had been regarded as an essential and legitimate phase of the eternal; but, for reasons of an historic, we might almost say, accidental, sort, the eternal was set over against the temporal, as something alien to it, and the latter regarded as a fallen and evil condition. The life of the world was a life of sin, and the function of the Church, of religion, was to redeem man from that world. In the fourth century of our era, a bold attempt was made to combine the universal Roman State with the universal or catholic Christian religion, and, at the first glance, we might imagine this eminently feasible. Why should not Christianity bear the same relation to the Roman State that the religion of Zeus and Athena had borne to the Athenian republic? That was what the men of the time asked themselves; and they answered, There is no reason. But there was the very best of reasons. The attempt had come too late. The Christianity of the fourth century was utterly unfitted to enter into any such relation, and just for the reason already mentioned. As a supernatural system, aiming to train men for a super-

natural life, and despising the natural life of States, it harbored in its bosom a secret hostility to all that these represented. If it combined with the empire, it was with the hope of ultimately mastering and suppressing it, and advancing its own claim to govern the world by denying it. While in the eastern half of the Roman empire it failed in this, and became mainly a corroding and demoralizing influence, in the western half it virtually succeeded, and turned the pagan naturalism of old Rome into a mystic supernaturalism. The city that had tried to conquer the world for an orderly earthly life now tried to conquer it for a superhuman life in the heavens. The natural, indeed, could not be suppressed; but it was discredited and neglected in favor of the supernatural. Religion, instead of being that side of human life which connected it with higher powers, and so completed it, became a means for rising above human life altogether.

This is the view of religion that pervaded the entire Middle Age, and that is most generally accepted even in our own time. According to it, this life is a mere probation, in which we bear a cross, in order that we may wear a crown in a world to come. Here the toil, yonder the reward. Here virtue, yonder bliss. Virtue, goodness, are not their own reward, but merely a means to something more desirable. And the virtues that contribute most to the desired end are not the civic and social ones, temperance, fortitude, wisdom, and justice, but faith, hope, love, and the performance of ritual observances. Indeed, and especially under Protestantism, faith came to be regarded as the one redeeming virtue. "By faith ye shall be saved." Civic life is common and profane; only churchly life is elevated and sacred.

Obviously enough, this is a very unhappy outcome, dividing human life against itself, and discrediting the more immediate portion of it. And yet it was perhaps necessary. If human life, as a civic and religious whole, could not be elevated into universality, it was surely well that, at least, one side of it, the religious, should be so elevated, with the possibility of drawing the other after it. Catholic Christianity had, and has, this great merit: it aims at universality, and opens up universal

vistas. Its great demerit was, and is, its failure to rehabilitate civic life. It either drew a sharp distinction between Church and State, or else strove to overbear the latter altogether. It utterly failed to restore in universal form that complete and harmonious unity of civic and religious life which had existed, in partial form, in the ancient States. And the reason of this was that it drew a sharp and harsh line of distinction between human or temporal life, on the one hand, and divine or eternal life, on the other, bringing them together only through a miracle. God, uncreated and eternal, is altogether different from man, created and temporal, and the two are united only by the miracle of the Incarnation. Man is not essentially divine. He has none of the divine attributes,—self-existence, eternity, freedom. Human life, with its social relations, is not divine life, but rather something that has to disappear before divine life. In a word, social life, with its domestic, social, economic, political, scientific, and philosophical interests, is not religious, and the man who perfectly performs his part in that life may be an altogether irreligious man, unless he holds certain supernatural beliefs, and takes part in church services.

So long as the Church was stronger than the State, she was able, in large measure, to subordinate, or even to suppress, all that the latter stood for; but, in these later centuries, the condition of things has been reversed, and now the State is asserting herself against the Church, saying to her, You wished to stand apart from me, and apart you shall stand. Especially is this true of our nation, which, as a nation, ignores the Church, and even goes so far as to forbid her to teach her doctrines in the public schools. The public schools of the United States are, on the whole, civic, not religious, institutions. We are very apt to rejoice at this condition of things, and to regard ourselves as superior to other nations, in having completely separated Church and State; but, though this may be admitted, it is surely not the highest condition of things. Anything that divides up human life, and bases one part of it upon one set of principles and another upon another, cannot but be hurtful. Indeed, the result is that our

civic life has ceased to be religious, and our religious life lacks content. There is not much human life in our pulpits, and not much religion in our legislatures. Our religion is not patriotic, our patriotism not religious.

The simple fact is : there is an utter incompatibility between the principles of our religion and those of our State, and it is this, and this alone, that justifies us in separating Church and State, and extruding religion from our public schools. There could be no reason for dealing so unhandsomely with a religion based upon the same principles as the State, and reinforcing them. In a word, while religion derives all authority from God, our State derives all authority from man. The one is based upon supernatural revelation, the other upon natural reason. Between these two things there is no compromise possible. We are vainly trying to serve two masters, and failing in the attempt. This becomes most painfully manifest when we try to find a rational basis for ethics to teach in our schools. We cannot have recourse to supernaturalism, and we can find nothing available in a reason which relegates all questions regarding man's spiritual nature and his destiny to supernaturalism for solution. Thus we are forced into a position of being compelled to teach children to be good, without being able to tell them what good is, and why they should be good. We can, at best, show them why they should be prudent.

In this condition of things there arises a very grave question, Can this division between the two sides of our life continue indefinitely, or must we try, in some way, to reconcile them ? That the division cannot continue is, I think, obvious ; it is leaving us without a rational ground for ethics, a rational hope for the highest aspirations of humanity. We must, therefore, try to bring the two sides of our life into harmony.

Now this can be done in either of two ways. We may either seek to adapt our State and social life to supernatural religion, as the New England Puritans did, and as the Roman Catholics and all persons who desire to see God acknowledged in our Constitution, would wish to do ; and then we should have to abandon our present position, and look to God as the

source of all authority, as the Middle Age did ; or we may abandon the supernatural altogether, and discover a religion in the principles upon which our civic life rests ; and then our nation will itself become a religious institution, and our civic life a religious life. I think there is no possibility of our ever adopting the former alternative. There remains, therefore, only the latter. We must find a religion in our civic principles and aims. The only question that remains is, whether it is possible to do so. Do these principles lend themselves to a religious interpretation ? I think they do ; but, before this can be made clear, we must fully understand what is meant by "religion." This we must now attempt.

How many definitions of religion have been given, and how hard it is to find one that covers all the facts, is well known. Those who insist upon considering a god necessary to religion are forced to deny that name to Buddhism, Jainism, and to all the many forms of fetishism and animism. The only definition that seems to me to cover the whole ground is this : Religion is a belief or theory of man's relation to his environment or to the universe, with action based on that belief or theory. Of course, if the universe is regarded as a mere phenomenon or creation of God, or an instrument in the hands of gods, then, of course, but only then, religion will include God or gods. If this definition be accepted, we have now to ask : Do the fundamental principles of our nation imply a theory of the universe and man's relation to it, a theory fitted to furnish sanctions for a course of moral action ?

In order the better to bring out these principles, it will be useful to contrast them with the principles of the old religion with which they are incompatible. According to that religion there is an omnipotent God, who created all things and all spirits, and of whom, therefore, they are mere phenomena, dependent entirely upon his good pleasure. Under such circumstances, man can have no independence, no existence of his own. He cannot be the ultimate source of anything, good or evil. He has no moral life, for that is possible only for a being who is the primal cause of his own actions. His existence, of whatever sort it may be, is a mere act of

divine favor, we might even say, of divine caprice. If God chooses to give him a happy phenomenality, well and good; if not, no complaint can be raised against him. He may do what he will with his own, or, rather, with himself, for a creation out of nothing contains nothing but himself. Job, amid unspeakable tortures, demands justice of God, based upon a well-grounded conviction of his own righteousness; but, on recognizing God's nature and his own, he is fain to say, "I had heard of thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: therefore I retract and repent in dust and ashes." He retracts all claim to justice, as he ought, being what he is. This is the attitude of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, equally. In such a system there can be no question where the source of all authority lies. It lies with the source of all action, in God. He is all in all. Man, being a mere phenomenon, whose reality is God, can find peace only in a recognition of this, in a laying aside of the delusion that he is anything in himself, and losing himself in his source. As a modern poet has put it, Life is

"The dream of a drop that hath withdrawn it  
From the primal fount, as itself were something."

It is true that only the profound thinkers have recognized this to be the meaning of the old religion,—the Origens, St. Bernards, St. Bonaventuras, and the like; and it is also true that only a few logical minds, like Augustine, Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards, have seen that it involved fatalism, complete absence of free-will.

It is upon this view of man's nature and relations that all the governments, as well as all the religions, of the Old World are founded, and, though some of them are departing from it, they have to belie their first principles in so doing. In contradistinction to all these, our government is founded upon the principle that the source of all authority lies in man himself; that he is an original source of action, responsible for his own deeds. The question is, Can any religion be based on this principle?

The framers of our Constitution "buildest better than they

knew." They laid the only possible foundation for a free government, and yet they did not fully realize all that was implied in their work. Indeed, few people realize it even now,—realize that these men were sweeping away the very foundation of old religions and governments, and substituting for it another; that they were removing the groundwork of tyranny and laying the groundwork of freedom and ethical life. But so it was. Assume that men are the source of authority. It follows at once that they must be free; for that which is unfree, that which is compelled by necessity, cannot be the source of anything. The source will lie in that which exercises the compulsion. That which is necessitated from within, if such a thought be thinkable, may be the source of power, but not of authority. I may be carried out to sea by a flood, but I do not therefore acknowledge any authority on the part of the flood. On the contrary, I may refuse to obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience, but I cannot well dispute its authority. That which has authority, then, is free. But that which is free must have its being in itself; must be eternal and indestructible. It cannot be created, for that which is created has its being in, and derives its nature from, that which creates it. If we are created by God, then, as Paul says, "in him we live, and move, and are" (Acts xvii. 28); in the last resort, He is "all in all" (I Cor. xv. 28). We are nothing but mere phenomena. But if we, as free beings, must necessarily be uncreated and eternal, every one of us, to what sort of world does this introduce us? Obviously to a world composed of a multitude of beings existing in and through themselves, beings whom no one can destroy or really harm. We are eternal and self-existent, or we are not free at all. This is an utterly different world from that which underlies the old religions and states. Can there be religion in such a world? If religion consists in the worship of a creating God by his creatures, then, of course, no. But this is not necessarily the definition of religion, as we have seen. Religion is any belief or theory of man's relation to his environment, or to the universe, the largest possible environment, with action based on such belief or theory. If the

world consists of a multitude of spiritual beings related to each other through mutual activity, and finding their well-being in such activity,—and we have seen that only on this supposition is there any moral world at all,—then the question of questions is, How shall this activity be regulated so as to produce the greatest amount of well-being, the last word being taken in its literal meaning? And the answer will express the religion of the future. It will be, in the deepest sense, the religion of democracy, as over against the old religion of monarchy.

The ideal of our American democracy is an association of essentially equal beings endeavoring, through each other, to attain the greatest amount of being, that is of knowledge, of affection and of will, with whatever is included, as condition or result, in these. This is, in the best sense, well-being. Now, if this ideal has any justification, it must be because it represents the order of the world and its aim. The world must be fundamentally a democracy, and its end must be an association such as has been described. But this is just the world which we have found to be alone moral. American democracy, therefore, gives the true basis for morality, which is, after all, the chief element of every worthy religion.

Here we must introduce another idea, to which the modern world has given prominence, viz., that of evolution. Just as the old monarchic idea of the world is correlated with a doctrine of creation, so the modern democratic idea is correlated with a doctrine of evolution. According to the former, the Primal One created the atomis, or individuals, of which the world is composed, and superintends their growth; according to the latter, the Primal Many are uncreated and unfold through union with each other. In both ideas the One and the Many are involved.

The doctrine of evolution, though now accepted by almost every educated man and woman, labors, thus far, under certain disadvantages, not very different from those attaching to the other doctrine. (1) It does not tell us what it is that evolves, nor why it evolves,—evolution is accepted, like creation, as a brute fact. (2) It does not enable us to pass from the inani-

mate to the animate. (3) It does not bridge over the gulf between the natural and the ethical. (4) It does not show us any satisfactory goal for evolution.

One of the most popular evolutionists (Drummond) says, "No living thinker has yet found it possible to account for evolution. Mr. Herbert Spencer's famous definition of evolution as 'a change from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity through continuous differentiations and integrations' is simply a summary of results, and throws no light on ultimate causes." Another (Weismann) tells us that "behind the co-operating forces of nature, which aim at a purpose, we must admit a cause . . . inconceivable in its nature, of which we can only say with certainty that it must be theological,"—a statement which at once lands us in miraculism and agnosticism. I need not occupy time by quoting admissions of the other three defects. They are readily to be found. Suffice it to say that evolution, thus far, is a mere "summary of results," not an explanation of anything. It has neither beginning nor end. The truth is, as the quotation from Weismann shows, it is tacked on to some sort of agnosticism or old-fashioned theology.

Now, it seems to me that, given the view of the world which I have shown to underlie our democracy, it is possible to remedy all these defects, fill all these gaps, and make of evolution a completely satisfactory theory of the world and of life. Instead of saying, as has been said heretofore, that the world starts with an inscrutable God, inscrutable atoms, or an inscrutable ether, not one of which can identify itself with our intelligence, and so be known, our theory says that the world consists of a multitude of sentient individuals or atoms, whose unity is their sentience, and that these are essentially related to each other through desire. Sentience and desire are two aspects of the same fundamental fact. There is no desire without sentience, and no sentience without desire. Given a multitude of such individuals, the world can be fully explained, and faith and agnosticism rendered unnecessary.

It will be perhaps said, But your fundamental sentiences

are as purely an assumption as the old gods, atoms, etc. I reply, No, and that for four reasons: (1) Because, in saying that sentience is fundamental, I am only saying that what the world is now, it always has been. The world, as I know it, and I can speak of no other, is merely a total of feelings arranged, grouped, and classified. (2) Because it is impossible to conceive any prime mover other than desire. (3) Because there is no desire but for that which is, in some degree, felt. (4) Because, inasmuch as feeling is the only thing that completely penetrates itself, it is the only world principle that can save us from agnosticism. Will, which some would substitute for it, is entirely ineffective. These seem sufficient reasons for assuming that the world is at bottom a democracy of feelings or, more strictly, of desiderant feelings. Atoms themselves, matter itself, in so far as we could know them, would have to be groups of feelings. Feeling is more primitive than matter, which, as far as we know it, is composed of feelings. We now arrive at this conclusion: The only possible completely intelligible and moral world is a world composed of essentially distinct feelings or sentiences (we must not say "sentient beings," because the being must be essentially permeable by feeling), interrelated through action and passion, two forms of feeling, and yet fundamentally impenetrable to each other. And, indeed, this is the world that we really find ourselves in, or in ourselves. I can feel your action, and you can feel mine; but my feeling, or the feeling which I am, is utterly opaque to you, and the feeling which you are to me. I can learn that you have a toothache, and even understand it, if I have had one as a modification of my own feeling; but I can never feel the toothache which you feel. As sentient and desiring subjects we are absolutely impenetrable to each other, and, in so far, we are hypotheses to each other. That is the price we pay for being realities, eternal realities, if you will. If you could feel my feelings, we should be merged into one, and both cease to be individuals. This does not lead to agnosticism, as might seem at first sight. There is nothing in you that I may not know, if you choose to be communicative; but your feelings I can never feel. So far, happily, we must

be eternally agnostics. That is the price of our being anything at all.

In a world, then, such as we have attempted to describe, what does evolution mean? It means the persistent desire of all sentient individuals to find satisfaction by acting upon, and being acted upon by, other individuals. It is this action and reaction that produces the world, which, as we have seen, is entirely made up of such sensible actions and reactions. Beings are more highly evolved in proportion as they are related to other beings, or in proportion as they have larger worlds. My world is the sum of the beings to whom I am related by feeling and desire, or, to name the more developed forms of these, by knowledge, love, and will. The oyster and the microbe are less developed than we are, because they have narrower relations and a smaller world. And we may even go below the microbe. The so-called inanimate world is what it is, because the sentient individuals who compose it have but the most beggarly and unchanging relations to each other. They seem to have but one fixed feeling, so that they do but one thing. This is the reason why physicists can treat the laws of nature as unchangeable, why exact physical science is possible. In proportion as beings develop and have larger worlds, the less possible is a predictive science of them. We can foretell the phases of the moon, but not those of nations or of men.

It is possible, then, to explain the whole course of evolution as the result of the interaction of innumerable sentient individuals, each endeavoring to find satisfaction, or, which is the same thing, to enlarge its world, by entering into more extensive and profound relations with other individuals, and then transmitting its results to its posterity. It is in this way that the atoms or molecules of matter are formed, and that they combine and cohere into bodies or material masses. It is in this way, as desires grew more varied and less stable, that living protoplasm, which, as Huxley says, lives only by dying, is formed, and from it, by the same process, are evolved all the forms of life. The world is essentially individual and essentially social. The ultimate elements are essen-

tially individual, their evolution, their progress towards well-being, is entirely due to social interaction, and is greater as that deepens and widens. If it is objected that of the passage from the inanimate and inorganic to the animate and organic, science, thus far, teaches us nothing, one may reply with Huxley : "If it were given me to look beyond the abyss of geologically recorded time to the still more remote period when the earth was passing through physical and chemical conditions which it can no more see again than a man can recall his infancy, I should expect to be a witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from not living matter." Or again, "With organic chemistry, molecular physics, and physiology yet in their infancy, and every day making prodigious strides, I think it would be the height of presumption for any man to say that the conditions under which matter assumes the properties we call 'vital' may not some day be artificially brought together." Indeed, this expectation is raised to a certainty when we realize that all matter is essentially feeling, and nothing but feeling, however inert and unconscious certain portions of it may seem. "*Vivre, c'est sentir,*" says Cabanis. *Être, c'est sentir*, I should say, for the reason that it is utterly impossible to conceive being as anything else. That which is not feeling is to us nothing, and must forever be nothing. One thing is certain: that which is not, in its nature, feeling can never be roused into feeling; for only that which feels can be roused at all.

I repeat, then, the world view that underlies our democracy and justifies it is this: The world is composed of, and created by, an innumerable multitude of sentient individuals, eagerly tending to, or desiring, satisfaction, which they can find only through each other. In the process of this insatiable desire, they unite their activities to form, first, brute matter so-called, then protoplasm, then all the forms of plant life, then all the forms of animal life, culminating, so far as we know, in man. Mere immediate feeling at the same time passes into conscious feeling, and consciousness is, on the whole, memory. To become conscious of any feeling, I must refer it to groups of remembered feelings. That is, the very meaning of conscious-

ness, which seems to be an attribute of animal, as distinguished from vegetable, life. Consciousness, finally, passes over into self-consciousness, or awareness that all feelings are modifications of one fundamental feeling, now called an *Ego* or *I*. The Ego, having thus come to recognize itself, begins to take itself into its own hands, so to speak, and to classify its feelings, appending to them tickets or symbols, usually of a vocal sort. Thus language arises, and, with it, the possibility of a boundless career. Language, we are wont to say, expresses thought; but the categories of thought are merely so many distinctions between groups of feelings. Apart from these they are nothing; with these, everything; for, as we have seen, the world is merely groups of feelings distinguished,—my world, groups of my feelings, or modifications of the fundamental feeling or sensibility which I am. I need not add that my body, that medium of activity and sensibility, is, in the last analysis, only a group of my feelings. I cannot imagine a more foolish inversion of fact than to say that thought and feeling are functions of matter, since matter itself is nothing but thought and feeling, or feeling differentiated by thought.

With the rise of self-consciousness, or, let us say at once, of human beings, two new phenomena arise,—religion and ethics. The former is man's attempt to deal with the subhuman world so as to draw the greatest satisfaction from it; the latter his attempt to deal with the human world for the same purpose. They, of course, merge with each other, for the reason that the agencies in the subhuman world are, at first, naturally conceived under human form. The earliest religion is pure superstition, which only slowly yields to natural science. As we all know, it has not yet entirely yielded, and the fault lies largely with natural science, which has not yet clearly seen its own implications. But all natural science grows out of superstition, astronomy out of astrology, chemistry out of alchemy, and so on. It is important to notice that religion was originally non-ethical and ethics non-religious. How they gradually approached, we shall see.

In their endeavor to find satisfaction through each other, through mutual help and association, men formed societies,

and ethical life began. Ethics is altogether a social affair. It is simply the principle of evolution, as social, become conscious of itself. Having advanced by instinct till they could advance no farther, men became self-conscious, and entered into ethical relations, adopting rules and regulations, which all virtually agreed to follow for the general good. Self-consciousness and ethical freedom appear at the point where man's world becomes so complicated as to demand a choice on the basis of past experience. The rules and regulations are enforced partly by use and wont, and partly by religious sanctions, that is, fear of the powers of nature, regarded as human in character. In this way religion came to be mixed up with ethics, and, in proportion as it did so, the service of the powers or gods became ethical, and men were regarded as standing in direct relation to them. There is hardly any greater event in human history than the passage from natural to ethical religion. It is especially marked in the case of the Hebrews. The old Hebrew religion was purely natural. Yahweh was a storm-god, just as the other gods, borrowed from the Canaanites, were gods of fertility. Such gods were, of course, worshipped with sacrifices and rejoicings, about which there is nothing ethical. It was the prophets who banished the fertility-gods, with their obscene rites, and raised the cruel Yahweh to the position of an ethical god, who desired mercy and not sacrifice. Then religion and ethics were united, the latter deriving its strongest sanctions from the former. Men were called upon to be moral, because moral life was pleasing to God, and called down his blessing.

The Hebrews themselves, indeed, while a nation, never succeeded in rising permanently above natural religion, with its sacrificial system: that was left for Christianity, which is, *par excellence*, an ethical religion, based on religious sanctions. Along with it go later Judaism and Islam. All these, though practically abandoning the sacrificial system, still consider a special ritual due to God,—this ritual being the humanized remnant of the old nature-sacrifice. In none of them are the demands of God satisfied by ethical life alone. Indeed, such life is frequently contemned in comparison with ritual and

faith. Cardinal Newman, in one of his sermons, and Henry Drummond, in his "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," make a great deal of this distinction, denying salvation to mere virtue.\*

It is very obvious, nowadays, that ethics based upon a religion of this sort is not, strictly speaking, ethics at all, but mere prudence, which is virtuous only because it expects a reward other than virtue itself.

To put this matter briefly: Man, on reaching self-consciousness, sought to relate himself favorably to his fellow-men and to the sub-human world, gradually finding his sanctions for his behavior to the former in fear of the agencies controlling the latter. Though these agencies came, more and more, to be endowed with human virtues, they never altogether lost their natural character, or ceased to inspire fear and hope, so that virtue based on these sanctions never really rose to the dignity of free virtue. At last the natural agencies, having been found to make a single manifold world, were united into one, and Monotheism was the result,—One God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth. So much, however, was he still a nature-god, that he had to be supplemented by a Son to redeem man from natural into ethical life, and a Holy Spirit to keep him ethical. At the same time, the breach between religion and ethics was never entirely healed. They continued to be represented by different institutions,—the former by the Church, the latter by the State; and though the Church tried to absorb the State, it never succeeded in so doing. Its terrors and its tyrannies proved in vain. The State at last asserted its independence, and the Church was made a matter of individual choice. This meant that free inquiry and choice should take

\* "Ei non peccaro; e s'elli hanno mercedi  
 Non basta, perchè non ebber battesmo  
 Ch'è parte della fede che tu credi:  
 E se furon dinanzi al C<sup>r</sup>istianesmo,  
 Non adorar<sup>r</sup> debitamente Dio,  
 E di questi cotai son io medesmo.  
 Per tai difette, e non per altro rio,  
 Semo perduti."

the place of supernatural fear and authority. The result of this free inquiry was science, an inquiry into the true nature and origin of the world and of man. This science, though it has made rapid strides in the last three hundred years, is only just beginning. Nevertheless, we can see that every step it takes is a step away from the theology that underlies the old religion. Whoever wishes to see the proofs of this may read Professor White's "History of the Warfare of Science with Theology."

And now the old supernatural, monarchic religion has passed away, or is rapidly passing away, along with the institutions founded upon it, and is giving place to a religion of democracy, which finds its highest expression, so far, in this great republic, which, in its Constitution, acknowledges no God, but finds the source of all authority in man.

It is, no doubt, at first, a little startling to think of our government, our national ideal, as a religion: we are so accustomed to think of religion as something quite distinct from the profane State. But this is mere prejudice, born of traditional notions. A religion is that which places us in such harmony with our environment that we attain the highest possible development or satisfaction,—development in knowledge, love, and will. But surely no institution was ever better calculated for this than our republic. Does it not make possible, as never before, the highest manhood? Does it not leave us free to grow to our full height? Does it not furnish us with opportunities for enlightenment and education, such as no other religion ever offered? Does it not secure us life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? Does it not promote free inquiry into the meaning of life, and encourage the greatest individual initiative? Does it not encourage the growth of the social spirit, and of the consciousness that we are, so to speak, members one of another? Does it not promote the deepest and most extensive humanity? Compare our treatment of Cuba with that of Armenia by the nations of Europe! Can any religion do more than this? Has any religion ever done so much? It is interesting to observe that the nations of Europe are slowly coming to the conviction that our education is the

only one that really makes men. You will no doubt recall the recent book of M. Demolins on the Superiority of the Anglo-Saxons.

But, under the influence of old notions regarding the nature of religion, some will perhaps say that our American ideal lacks two of the essentials of religion: it supplies no god, and promises no immortality. The answer is, that the old external god, an autocratic spirit among spirits, being incompatible with freedom and ethical life, finds no justification for continued existence as a factor in thought, and must be replaced by the perpetual divinity of every one of us. God is not a being reflecting barbaric splendor from a cloudy throne, to awe a race of helpless, cringing sycophants, but the sense of right and the strength of will enthroned in every human soul. *"Ηθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαιμωνί,"* said Herakleitos long ago. Our American ideal, in truth, gives us the only God about whom there can be no doubt, the God whom each one of us knows as the deepest impulse in his own soul. And as to immortality, the religion of Americanism is the only one that makes it a certainty. In the old religion, it was a hope, a matter of faith. It was held that God, by a pure act of grace, would accord an eternal life of weal for a small number, and of woe for a large one, of phenomenal beings, who had no claim to justice or pity. That was surely a poor outlook,—immortality not certain; and, if a fact, probably an eternity of misery. If the principles upon which American liberty rests are genuine, then immortality is the most certain thing in the world,—immortality for every living thing. If man is the source of authority, he is a moral being, and if he is a moral being, he is free. But a free being is necessarily self-subsistent; for that which is not self-subsistent is subject to that which gives it subsistence. Thus, according to the principles of Americanism, man is free and immortal in his own right. No external power can annihilate or damn him. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are his, for the acquiring, forever.

I think, then, we may conclude, not only that Americanism is a religion, but that it is the noblest of all religions, that which best insures the realization of the highest manhood and woman-

hood, and points them to the highest goal,—a goal which it is their task throughout eternity to approach without reaching. It is a religion, too, that unifies our present life with eternal life, and identifies our civil with our religious life. It is a religion that can be taught to every human being, and that, when taught, will make all men brothers. It can be made the principle of ethical life in all its phases,—domestic, social, and political. Religion need no longer be banished from our public schools, as a mere matter of individual opinion, when it is really the mainspring of social life. In teaching children to lead the life of true Americans, we shall be leading them in the paths of eternal life.

We have still to inquire, What are the ideas and duties attaching to such a religion as we have tried to present? In speaking of the ideals, we need not stop to compare them with those of the old religion,—a lazy, useless heaven for a few, a restless and devouring hell for the many. The ideal of the future religion is perfectly simple. It is a social order of conscious beings working with all their might for universal growth in knowledge, love, and will-power,—beings who find their bliss in each other's society. Heaven is the ever-growing unfolding of spirits through such pure and high intimacy. As to the duties of the religion of the future, they are very different from those of the religion of the past. The latter consisted chiefly in holding certain beliefs, taking part in certain ceremonies or observances, and saving one's own soul. If these things were done, the world might be left to the devil, who, indeed, was supposed to fall heir to the larger share of it. The duties of the religion to come will be summed up in a single precept: Do all that you can to raise yourself and every other human being to the greatest possible height of insight, of kindly, intelligent sympathy, and of helpfulness. Or, to put it negatively, Do your best to put an end to ignorance, prejudice, hatred, exclusiveness, weakness, selfishness. That, indeed, is the whole duty of man. Jesus, borrowing two old Hebrew commandments, made it consist in loving God with all one's powers, and one's neighbor as oneself. The second commandment was often forgotten in the

vain attempt to obey the first, and, even though it had been obeyed, it was defective so long as love was not defined. We can to-day drop the first of these commands and define the second. Love must mean, not a mere feeling of attachment and desire of possession, but a desire and a determination to elevate its objects to the highest worth. Such objects will, of themselves, be lovable. In the old religion a great deal was said about self-sacrifice, until at last it came to be regarded as the chief virtue, which looked for a large reward in the life to come. "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord," a good speculation, no doubt. In the future relation there will be no such thing. When it is felt and seen that the good of others is inseparably bound up with our own, that altruism is the most intelligent egoism, then we shall recognize that what we do for another we do for ourselves, and, further, that what we do for ourselves we do for all mankind. I cannot possibly become wiser, or more loving, or more energetically helpful, without being to that extent a blessing to my kind.

And now for a closing remark. If our nature ever become conscious of what is involved in its first principles, and make them the basis of a religion, two great changes will come over us. (1) The present unbrothering, supernatural, world-dispising religion of the churches will disappear, and the great edifices and uncounted wealth, which it now uses to misdirect men's highest interests, will be used to elevate men to a higher sense of their duties in the present life, as that in which alone we at present have any duties. (2) The energies which are now wasted in the pursuit of worthless ends, pleasure, place, flattery, or of mere means to ends, wealth, possessions, display, etc., will be directed towards the only end that is really worthy, and an end in itself,—to the elevation of mankind in the three attributes of spirit. The abandonment of a false and enslaving religion, and the direction of all our energies to the realization of a new one, reared on the foundation of our national life,—these are the chief tasks of a century that is soon to open before us. Neither of them will be easy. Old superstitions die hard, and unreal ends that satisfy low and immediate appetites have a strong hold on the ordinary

human being ; but they must in the long run give way before the growth of intelligence and good-will. Then the cruel distinction that has so long been drawn between civic and religious life, between the service of man and the service of God, will be blotted out, and it will be recognized that a noble civic life, which seeks the good of all, is the most religious of all lives.

THOMAS DAVIDSON.

NEW YORK.

### THE MORAL ASPECT OF CONSUMPTION.

THE new stress laid upon consumption is one of the most significant changes in the treatment of economics in recent years. Long ago, indeed, Mr. Ruskin, himself taking up the older tradition, had declared that the study of *spending* was the most important branch of Political Economy ;\* and as early as 1854 Le Play had published his great work, "Les Ouvriers Européens," in which "the workmen's way of life and the budget of expenses" received at least as much attention as "the workmen's means of living and the budget of receipts." But both Mr. Ruskin and Le Play spoke to unbelieving generations ; and by an irony of fate it was not the Ethical or Historical School of economists who were to bring consumption to its high place of honor, but the Austrian School, who arose as opponents of the German "Historicals," as masters in analytic reasoning, as defenders of the hypothetical, as advocates of "natural value," and as restorers of an amended "economic man." For the whole question of value was reopened ; and as this centre-piece of economics was made to depend not upon cost but upon utility, it followed that the using of things rather than the making of them became the matter of prime importance. So Mr. Keynes tells us that a true theory of consumption is the keystone of political economy ;† and economists are beginning to see, as Mr. Hobson bears witness, "that the prosperity of a country

---

\* "Crown of Wild Olive," p. 77.

† "Scope and Method of Political Economy," p. 107.